

**WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DIVISION &
GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM OFFICE
ALL BRANCH WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT - WEEK ENDING 8/08/14**

IMMEDIATE OFFICE

QUALITY SYSTEM ASSESSMENT (AUDIT) OF TCEQ'S TMDL PROGRAM: Staff attended a Quality System Assessment (aka QSA or an Audit) of Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program, in Austin, Texas. The Audit (lead by TCEQ) was on August 29th and 30th, and focused on current projects. All aspects of these projects were reviewed including: initiation of the projects, quality assurance project plans, workplans, internal audits, reviews, and other deliverables. TCEQ's TMDL Program is one of three programs within EPA Region 6 that's Quality System has been Delegated to the State due to their exceptional QAQC system. A QSA is a provision of the Delegation, and is conducted once every three years. There are many inherent benefits of a QSA, for example it helps ensure communication between EPA R6 Water Quality's Quality Assurance Officer and TCEQ's Quality Assurance Staff and it assists in finding more efficient ways to streamline the QA process within programs. Contact: **Sala Senkayi, 665-6477**

**ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BRANCH
WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT**

EPA REGION 6 REQUESTS EXEMPTION FROM COMPETITION for the OSAGE NATION, OKLAHOMA UNDERGROUND INJECTION CONTROL (UIC)

GRANT: The Osage Nation's Oklahoma Underground Injection Control (UIC) program has been operating under an exception from competition for the past several years. On August 1st, 2014, EPA Region 6 submitted an *exemption* from competition request to EPA Headquarters for concurrence/approval. As opposed to submitting an exception from competition on an annualized basis, a ten (10) year exemption from completion for the Osage Nation, Oklahoma Underground Injection Control (UIC) program grant would be more efficient. The Region maintains that the Osage Nation is the entity best suited to conduct the UIC work for this grant. **Curry Jones 57293; Mike Vaughan, 665-7313; Maurice Rawls, 665-8049**

**ECOSYSTEMS BRANCH
WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT**

MUDDY BOTTOMS ATV & RECREATION PARK, LLC: A Consent Agreement and Final Order was completed on August 5, 2014, assessing the Respondent, Muddy Bottoms ATV & Recreation Park, LLC, a civil penalty of \$9,877. This enforcement action was a result of referral by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District, for violations of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. On or about November, 2013, the Respondent filled approximately 13.24 acres of wetlands in Webster Parish, Louisiana during construction of a new ATV park. EPA previously issued an Administrative Order on Consent, in which the Respondent agreed to remove some of the fill, restore some wetlands that were negatively impacted, and apply to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit (after-the-fact). **Ken Teague, 665-6687; Sharon Parrish, 665-7275**

TEXAS WATERSHED ROUNDTABLE: On July 31, 2014 the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI) hosted the semi-annual Texas Watershed Roundtable in Waco, TX at the Texas Farm Bureau headquarters. This event is intended to promote water quality improvement through watershed based planning. There were about 100 attendees from state and federal agencies, universities, cities, river authorities, and others with interest in watershed protection. Presentations included an EPA overview of current programs, a recap of member-driven issues, highlights from watershed planning efforts across the state, septic system impacts, and future planning efforts. **Philip Crocker, 665-6644; Mike Bira, 665-6668; Henry Brewer, 665-8146**

LOUISIANA NUTRIENT REDUCTION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION MEETING: Watershed Management Section (EW) staff were invited and attended the Louisiana Nutrient Reduction Strategy implementation meeting, Tuesday, August 5, hosted by the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) in Baton Rouge. The implementation meeting was attended by various state and the Natural Resource Conservation Commission. This was the first of what are to be frequent implementation meetings. Furthermore, EW staff visited with LDEQ on nutrient related topics such as nutrient monitoring redesign, current EPA funded nutrient criteria development activities, coastal dissolved oxygen criteria (DO) development, and inland DO criteria revisions. **Forrest B. John 665-8368**

SOUTH LLANO WATERSHED MEETING: On August 5, 2014, EPA Region 6 staff met with Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB), Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI), and Texas Tech University in Temple, TX at the TSSWCB headquarters. This meeting was called to provide guidance and assistance to the state and Texas Tech in the development of a Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) for the South Llano River. The EPA Nonpoint source Program, authorized under Section 319 of the CWA, requires that watershed plans contain nine elements to be addressed before states can spend program funds to implement Best management Practices (BMPs). At this meeting EPA discussed the potential for the South Llano WPP to be developed as a Healthy Watershed project, and we provided guidance in WPP development. This WPP will be authored by Texas Tech and TWRI, and submitted to TSSWCB for their approval prior to being accepted as complete by EPA Region 6. **Mike Bira, 665-6668; Henry Brewer, 665-8146**

PLANNING & ANALYSIS BRANCH WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT

EPA REGION 6 FIRST GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE POSTER COMPETITION:

A member of the Surface Water Center and the Deputy Director of the Water Quality Protection Division served on the panel of judges for the first EPA Region 6 Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development Poster Competition held in conjunction with the MS4 Stormwater Conference, on July 31, 2014 in Fort Worth, Texas. Fourteen posters were submitted for consideration with the judges selecting a First, Second, and Third Places, and a Student winner. The conference attendees selected a People's Choice award. Additional information on the projects and/or concepts featured in the posters can be found on the EPA Region 6 Green Infrastructure website: <http://www.epa.gov/region6/water/npdes/greeninfrastructure/index.html>
Patricia A Taylor, 665-6403 and David F. Garcia, 665-7593

ENERGY MANAGEMENT: Staff from the Partnerships and Communications Team, the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the Brownsville Public Utilities Board participated in a GoToMeeting session on August 4th to finalize plans for the Energy Management Workshop that will be held in Brownsville, Texas, on September 23 and 24. Staff are now promoting the workshop with those on the invitee list. **David Reazin, 665-7501**

NPDES PERMITS AND TMDL BRANCH WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT

THE 30th ANNUAL REGION VI PRETREATMENT WORKSHOP: The 30th Annual Region VI Pretreatment Workshop is being held in Fort Worth, Texas, from August 4 - 7, 2014. The Region VI Pretreatment Association is made up of volunteers from each of the Region 6 States whose professions involve working with Industrial Pretreatment. The workshop includes two half day sessions used to provide a basic Pretreatment 101 course for those personnel new to the Pretreatment Program. Additional concurrent and breakout sessions are included as part of the program to offer attendees opportunities to see the latest developments in industrial pretreatment. As part of this year's program, David Garcia, Deputy Director of the Water Quality Protection Division is providing the Opening Remarks, and Ivan Vikin, Special Agent in Charge, Criminal Investigation Division, is scheduled to give a presentation on criminal investigations. **Rudy Molina, 665-6731**

PROGRAM ACTIVITY MEASURE – PRIORITY PERMITS ISSUANCE: As of August 6, 2014, EPA Region 6 in coordination with State agencies issued a total of 16 out of 21 (76%) priority permits. Utilizing the swapping selection process, the Region will meet the national goal of 100% for FY2014. The issuance of “priority permits” is a Program Activity Measure (PAM) of the Office of Water National Water Program Guidance, that focuses on the re-issuance of permits that are considered to be environmentally significant. It is also a measure reported under the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) to track the efficiency and effectiveness of the NPDES permitting program. Each fiscal year (since 2005) EPA Regional Offices commit to the issuance of a target number of priority permits. **Kilty Baskin, 665-7500; Paul Kaspar, 665-7459, Syed Shahriyar, 665-2783**

REGION 6 TMDL PROGRAM MANAGERS MEETING: On August 27-28, 2014, the Region will host a TMDL Program Managers Meeting. The intent of the meeting is to discuss the program's new vision and the process for setting state priorities, including the development of TMDLs and/or alternatives. This meeting will ultimately increase the States knowledge regarding the TMDL program's new Vision and Measures while providing a forum to discuss expectations for the coming years. **Monica Burrell, 665-7530**

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THE NEW MEXICO SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS [RIO HONDO, TULAROSA, AND RIO PEÑASCO WATERSHEDS] TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL) ENDS: The New Mexico Environment Department's (NMED) Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) released the draft Sacramento Mountains [Rio Hondo, Tularosa, and Rio Peñasco Watersheds] TMDLs for public comment on July 7, 2014. The 30-day comment period on this document closed August 7, 2014. The SWQB held the public meeting to discuss the draft document on July 16, 2014. The draft document includes 13 TMDLs associated with 8 water segments for *E. coli*, Turbidity, total phosphorous, and total nitrogen. **Katrina Higgins-Coltrain, 665-8143**

MONTHLY CONFERENCE CALL WITH THE TEXAS: Representatives of the NPDES Permits & TMDL Branch participated on a monthly conference call with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality on August 5, 2014, to discuss programmatic issues in regards to priority permits issuance; bacteria requirements for industrial dischargers; and permit issuance process for quarry operations. The monthly calls are part of the mechanism that ensures a cooperative relationship amongst the EPA and State agencies in maintaining the effectiveness and efficiency of the NPDES permitting program. **Kilty Baskin, 665-7500; Michael Carrillo, 665-7381; Paul Juarez, 665-7247; Paul Kaspar, 665-7459**

OKLAHOMA DRAFT PERMIT REVIEW: Currently in house from ODEQ for EPA review to be completed during the month of August are four draft individual permits for reissuance including Sequoyah Fuels, OK0000191 (expired 6/30/2010); City of Sallisaw, OK0028169 (expires on 10/31/2014); McAllister Army Ammunition Plant, OK0000523 (expired 1/31/2013), and Wynnewood Refining, OK0000825 (expired 12/31/2008). Additionally, ODEQ has submitted for reissuance its general permit for Hydrostatic Test, OKG270000 (expires 3/22/2015), with a 90-day review period ending in October. **Denise Hamilton, 665-2775**

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION BRANCH WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT

UPDATE ON HRI AQUIFER EXEMPTION (CHURCH ROCK, SECTION 8): The GW/UIC Section is currently finalizing the Statement of Basis for our reassessment of the original 1989 aquifer exemption granted Hydro Resources Inc. (HRI) to mine uranium in Section 8 near Church Rock, NM. This reassessment was agreed by the EPA Regional Administrators from Regions 6 and 9 after their consultation with the Navajo Nation on March 15, 2012. EPA solicited information on possible current sources of drinking water on or near Section 8 (i.e., on adjacent Sections 9 and 17) for our reassessment but received very little data relevant to our current use exemption criteria. None of the new information alters the technical basis for EPA's original approval decision on the HRI aquifer exemption. **Phil Dellinger, 665-8324; Lisa Pham, 665-8326**

PERGAN MARSHALL UPDATE: Pergan and their attorney met with a TCEQ enforcement group, which included Bryan Sinclair Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) Enforcement Division Director, in Austin on August 4th. This meeting was to discuss TCEQ's pending enforcement action centered on Pergan's unauthorized injection of hazardous waste. At this meeting Pergan indicated they are no longer injecting any hazardous waste as they have expended the raw material used in the product manufacture that generated the hazardous waste. Pergan continues to inject nonhazardous waste without TCEQ's authorization. At this meeting Pergan indicated they should be submitting the permit application for their new well by Friday August 8th. This well will be drilled to a deeper injection interval, the Pettit, so Pergan can stop injecting into the overpressured Rodessa injection interval. Bryan Sinclair told Pergan that an enforcement order would be issued soon, possibly by August 11th. Pergan also indicated to TCEQ they would be contacting Region 6 to coordinate a meeting to discuss their noncompliance with their existing no migration petition and to discuss a compliance plan. As of August 6th Region 6 has not been contacted by Pergan. **Brian Graves, 665-7193**

PLAN REVIEW FOLLOW-UP ASSISTANCE TO EASTERN SHAWNEE TRIBE OF OK: Members of the Region 6 Tribal Drinking Water Program and Tribal Affairs participated in a call requested by the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma on July 21, 2014. The call was to

help the Tribe follow-up with their engineering consultants who recently constructed the new Indigo Sky Casino Water System. Unfortunately, the consultants built the water system without taking into account Region 6 plan review comments which were provided prior to construction. Now, the water system has been cited with significant deficiencies during a sanitary survey that are related to inadequate construction. On the call, Region 6 discussed providing copies of correspondence documentation to help the Tribe follow-up with the consultants as well as their Tribal Leadership and Gaming Commission to request support for addressing the deficiencies. This is an example of the unfortunate reality that EPA Regions lack the regulatory authority for plan and specs review and approval, whereas State Primacy Agencies have that authority to protect non-Tribal water systems from improper construction. Currently, Region 6 offers our plan review services voluntarily to the Tribes, as we work toward developing something that would protect the Tribes short of regulatory authority. **Kim Ngo, 665-7158; Jenna Manheimer, 665-7318; Randy Gee, 665-8355; Tina Arnold, 665-2709; Christina Kracher, 665-8054**

GROUNDWATER/UIC SECTION OFFERS ASSISTANCE TO TEXAS RAILROAD COMMISSION GEOPHYSICIST: Groundwater/UIC Section staff offered assistance to the new Texas Railroad Commission (TRRC) Geophysicist, Dr. Craig Pearson, in providing technical background information on the Barnett Shale basin and local geology. The assistance included area maps and a selection of references. The North Texas geologic and geophysical references were compiled while researching the induced seismicity report, and following up on more recent earthquakes. The maps incorporated TRRC well locations, USGS relocated seismic events, and different published fault locations. There are several large faults mapped in the immediate vicinity of the relocated earthquakes, though the exact location of the faults is uncertain at a refined scale. **Nancy Dorsey, 665-2294**

STATE RURAL WATER ASSOCIATION COLLABORATIVE WORKSHOP: Members of the Region 6 Drinking Water Section participated in the New Mexico Rural Water Association's Statewide Drinking Water Training Collaborative Workshop on July 29, 2014, via conference call. The workshop was a part of the Training and Technical Assistance for Small Public Water Systems, under the auspices of EPA HQ. The workshop invitations were extended to state, local, and federal participants to discuss critical drinking water training needs for small systems, including areas of rule implementation, capacity development and operations. Also discussed was the leveraging of training resources whereby tribal systems are invited, and vice versa on EPA sponsored trainings whereby State-regulated water systems are invited. Based on our input, the NMRWA will develop a training operating plan will be open to small systems both tribal and non-tribal systems. **Angela Restivo, 665-7123; Kim Ngo, 665-7158; Amy Camacho, 665-7175**

REGION 6 SPONSORED DRINKING WATER TRAINING FOR TRIBES IN NM: The Region 6 Tribal Drinking Water Program sponsored "Understanding SDWA Compliance" training provided by the Southwest Environmental Finance Center on July 29, 2014 in Albuquerque, NM. The training was free and offered Operators the continuing education credits through the State of New Mexico as well as the EPA Region 6 Tribal Drinking Water Program. Topics covered at this training included: Safe Drinking Water Act overview, 2014 compliance sampling schedules, entry point vs distribution sampling, Stage 2 Disinfection Byproducts sampling, and chemical, radiological, and bacteriological sampling. This is one of a number of training events provided for Tribal water system operators and utility managers in Region 6. **Kim Ngo, 665-7158**

GROUNDWATER/UIC SECTION ANALYZES SELECT DISPOSAL WELLS NEAR

AZLE: Groundwater/UIC Section staff analyzed disposal well reports filed with the Texas Railroad Commission (TRRC) for nine wells in the area of the Azle seismicity. The injection formation is karstic limestone and dolomite, with significant rock heterogeneities varying between formation porosity, fractures, vugs and caverns. The Excel technique, known as a Hall plot with derivatives, was developed for the draft Induced Seismicity report, utilized UIC-reported individual well operational hydraulic data, and was refined for this analysis. In some cases, TRRC had requested daily monitoring data from various area injection well operators and R6 staff noted significant differences between the daily well monitoring data and monthly reported TRRC UIC program data.

The individual well operational data plots provided a long-term timeframe look at individual well hydraulic behavior within the area disposal zone as well as a correlation to the timing of area seismic events. Several of the wells exhibited the same pattern of enhanced injectivity followed by decreased injectivity, finally moving to drastically reduced injectivity around the time of the earthquakes. The cumulative well pressure behavior seen on the Hall plots may reflect a combination response of the fluid moving through fractured or cavern areas (enhancement) and back into rubble or formation porosity (decrease) and finally possibly encountering area faults and/or other area injection wells. Although not definitive in terms of earthquake cause and effect, the plots provide an additional piece of information to identify potential injectors of concern in seismically active disposal areas. **Nancy Dorsey, 665-2294; Ken Johnson, 665-8473**

GULF OF MEXICO PROGRAM WEEKLY ACTIVITY REPORT

MS DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY FIELD WORK ASSISTANCE: GMPO Science Team members provided technical support to MS Dept. Of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) as they conducted the annual Mississippi Coastal Assessment (MCA) on July 28 – August 2. The MCA is conducted with requirements of the Clean Water Act (CWA) §106. For the 2014 assessment, there were (32) sampling locations and two sampling teams with a total of 9 staff (3 MDEQ, 6 EPA). Over 500+ samples were collected, including hydrographic water column profiles (temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and salinity), water quality (chlorophyll a), sediment (total organic carbon and other analytes) and the collection of benthic invertebrates (worm tube casts, brittle stars and shell detritus). There were also blanks and duplicates collected; and, a Quality Assurance audit was also conducted. A full article will be prepared for the GMPO 2014 Annual Report. **Jane Watson, Diane Altzman 228-688-7015**

GMPO STAFF PROVIDES BENEFICIAL USE SITES SUPPORT USACE OFFICE -

NEW ORLEANS LA /AND BILOXI MS: On August 5-6, staff engaged in meetings looking at potential large BU sites for future Port of Gulfport activities. Navigation channel and turning basin expansion could produce something in the order of 50,000,000 Cubic yards of material over the next 10 years or so. Consultants for the Port are working on an EIS for this activity and are trying to clearly define BU objectives for the material. The working group has been looking at potential dredged material placement in the Biloxi Marsh, LA because it offers easy and inexpensive placement that will directly benefit fisheries and other assets in Western MS. Another option would retain a large portion of the material in MS, with the best candidate being the restoration of a Hancock County shoreline. Either project could ultimately result in the restoration or creation of up to 5,000 acres of marsh and related habitat. **Jane Watson, Diane Altzman 228-688-7015**

CONFERENCE ON ECOLOGICAL AND ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION (CEER) NEW ORLEANS, LA: GMPO (Troy Pierce) and the ORD Gulf Ecology Division (Matt Harwell) moderated the July 29th afternoon session "Restoring Water Quality while Restoring the Gulf of Mexico" with eight presenters on subjects ranging from volunteer water monitoring to trash free waters. Troy Pierce also gave a presentation entitled "Community Driven Water Quality Improvement to Benefit Gulf Ecosystems" during the session. Ben Scaggs presented an Update and Overview of the Gulf Ecosystem Council Activities, part of the Deepwater Horizon related programs in the Gulf of Mexico. **Jane Watson, Diane Altsman 228-688-7015**

NATIONAL OCEAN POLICY (NOP) - REGIONAL PLANNING BODY (RPB): Staff participated and reported out on an internal EPA Headquarters, Regional offices and geographic programs conference call. It appears that several of the Regional Planning Body's (RPBs) are moving along with their teamwork (States, Tribes and Federal Agencies); many others are not. This may be due to an early influx of funding; however, the funding was not EPA and has been discontinued. Specifically for the Gulf of Mexico RPB, the team members are in general concurrence that a new "team" (the RPB) is not needed. The Gulf of Mexico Alliance (GOMA) has a firm foundation in the region, robust participation and is generally thought to be the best current approach to including National Ocean Plan priorities (many of which are similar to GOMA action items). An "RPB-like" group has formed and met both at the 2013 GOMA All Hands Meeting, and again in February 2014. **Jane Watson, Diane Altsman 228-688-7015**

GULF OF MEXICO ALLIANCE (GOMA) PLANNING FOR 2015: Alliance 2015 Blueprint: The GOMA is coming to the end of Action Plan II (2009-2014) and has accomplished 95% of the action items. As part of the strategic planning process, GOMA is re-evaluating its priorities with input from state and federal partners, academia, non-governmental organizations and businesses throughout the geographic region. This will better inform the development of the "2015 Blueprint." **Jane Watson, Diane Altsman 228-688-7015**